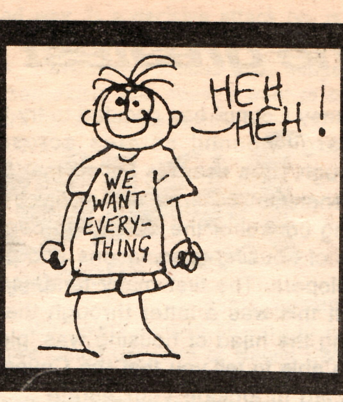
contra FLOW



JUNE / JULY 1995

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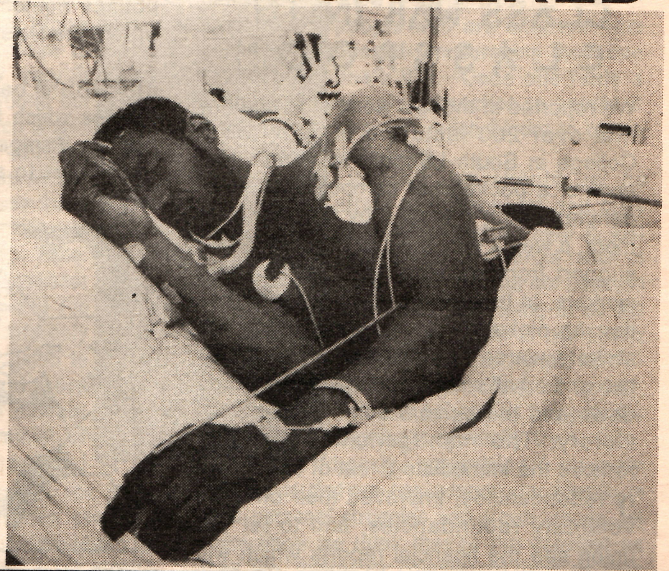
WHO'S NEXT?

BRIAN MURDERED



On May 3rd Brian Douglas was arrested after being stopped and searched by Kennington cops, PCs Harrison and Tuffey. After 5 days spent in hospital on a life-support machine, he died as a result of a fractured skull received during the arrest and in Kennington Police Station. He had been struck several times on the back of the head with a US-style long baton, recently introduced into use in this country.

Brian is not only the first to be killed with the new baton, but also the latest in a long line of Black people killed by the cops over the past years.Brian's death is not, and obviously was not seen as an isolated event, but as an increasing threat, particularly to Black people, from an increasingly armed police force.

Brian's family and friends have formed a campaign, daending justice for his death, a public enquiry, and the withdrawing of the new long batons.On May 14th a loud and angry demonstration was held opposite Kenington Road police station. There were hundreds of people there - a good turnout as the demo was organised at 3 days notice. The cops kept pretty much out of sight, braving massed cries of "murderers" when any emerged from the copshop, until the demonstration tried to march off towards Oval tube, when they blocked off the road in force.

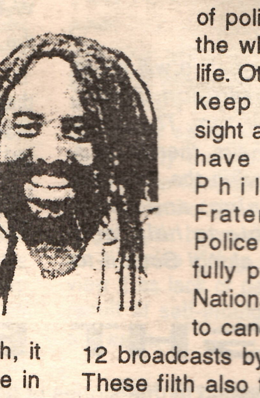
The Justice for Brian Douglas Campaign are organising a series of public meetings to mobilise for a March on June 10th, 12 noon from Clapham Common, to Kennington Park. They're meeting weekly at the moment, and need volunteers, donation to keep the campaign going, and mass distribution of their leaflets.

Contact them c/o 77a Atlantic Road,
London, SW9,
Phone 0171 733 7790 or 0956 430 124.

FROM DEATH ROW TO YOU !

...Life Or Death On The Dotted Line

Mumia Abu-Jamal is a radical African-American journalist on death row in Pennsylvania, USA for a 1982 conviction of the murder of a Philadelphia copper. Despite overwhelming evidence of his innocence (obvious forensic mismatches, witness changing stories etc etc) and the blatant judicial racism and political bias in his legal case, Mumia and his supporters have unsucessfully battled to have the evidence heard in the courtroom for thirteen years and now appear to have lost the legal battle to save his life. All Mumia's legal appeals have been exhausted, a **death warrant can be signed at any time leaving him with only thirty days to live.**



The US justice system views every black person as a guilty person. It is a system that maintains the world's highest incarceration rate of people of African descent. Despite making up less than 6% of the US population, black men make up 40% of death row prisoners. As such, it isn't possible to look at Mumia's case in isolation, to look at it as just another framed prisoner story in the pages of ***contra*FLOW.** His case is a microcosm of the out and out racist U.S legal system and a part of the continuing war on black radical organising.

NEVER QUIET

For being angry, outspoken and black, Mumia has been framed and imprisoned and every attempt made to silence him. Through his position at age 15 as Minister Of Information with the Philadelphia Black Panther Party (B.P.P) and his broadcasts as the "voice of the voiceless" in the 1970's for WUHY-FM, Mumia was in constant direct confrontation with the racist state. He is one of few journalists to look behind the media lies surrounding black radical movements, most notably State-planted media disinformation about black organisation MOVE and the cops' year long siege of their Powelton Village house in 1978 and the very public City-sponsored bombing of the MOVE house in Philly that left 11 members dead. Despite imprisonment, and simple tactics like denying him a typewriter or much library time, Mumia has not been silenced and he continues to write articles and essays on a wide range of political issues, all the while fighting for life. Other attempts to keep Mumia out of sight and out of mind have come from Philadelphia Fraternal Order of Police who successfully pressurised the National Public Radio to cancel a series of 12 broadcasts by Mumia from death row. These filth also tried (but failed) to pressure publisher Addison-Wesley into stopping the publication of Mumia's new book *Live From Death Row.* Liberals who look for 'free speech' and 'rights' from the State and get upset when the toes of 'democracy' are trodden on, can learn loads from Mumia's case.

BLACK ACTIVISM: A DEADLY BUSINESS

It's not just political ranting when we say there is a State war on black radical organising. It's backed up by endless examples of concrete plans made by the State to uproot and destroy black attempts at empowerment and self-determination within black communities and in the U.S in general. On the more covert level are the library's worth of documents uncovered from the F.B.I's CounterIntelligence Program (COINTELPRO) initiated in the 60's against the Black Panther Party, showing nationwide surveillance and harassment of black and white political activists, suppression of evidence in trials, the use of provocateurs and the spreading of disinformation to foment splits in radical organisations. In Mumia's hometown of Philadelphia alone, files were compiled on 18,000 people and 600 groups.

On a more blatant and sinister level is the assassination of black activists, exemplified by the murder of Illinois Black Panther Party leader Fred Hampton in 1968 shot to death by cops as he lay sleeping in his house, after being drugged by an informant. Fred Hampton is one of over 30 Black Panthers killed by the police since the B.P.P's inception in 1966. That's just another statistic in this article but think about it.

The case of Dhoruba Bin Wahad, a former leader of the New York Black Panthers can put Mumia Abu-Jamal's case into a wider political context and demonstrates the nature of COINTELPRO. Bin Wahad was convicted in 1971 for attempted murder of two cops and sentenced to 25 years. A hard fought federal civil rights action against the F.B.I by Wahad's attorney resulted in the release of over 300, 000 pages of COINTELPRO documentation exposing an extensive campaign to destroy the B.P.P and -surprise, surprise - showing that evidence of Bin Wahad's innocence had been deliberately suppressed. In 1990, after spending nineteen years in prison for a 'crime' he did not do, the NY State court overturned his conviction and Bin Wahad walked free. His real crime - being a black activist.

RACIST FUCK WITH A DEADLY PEN

With such an interesting story, it's possible to get carried away with the intrigue. Coming back to reality (?), it is the life of Mumia Abu-Jamal that we now have to focus on. We have to spread as far and as wide as possible details of Mumia's case. The election in 1994 of death penalty lover Tom Ridge as Governor of Pennsylvania, a sicko who has already signed 5 death warrants ending Pennsylvania's 30 years without a State execution makes the situation urgent; the legal murder of Mumia is frighteningly close. It is necessary to set any despondency or political cynicism aside and to continue the protest for Mumia's life. If the death warrant in signed then we must take to the streets, fight for his life by all means necessary. We'll let American businesses and State administration offices over here know we won't stand for murder. Write to PDC, BCM Box 4986, London WC1N 3XX with your phone no. to be put on their phone tree for emergency demos. Please do what you can to save Mumia's life. International protest does help Mumia's case!! You can write to ***Governor Tom Ridge, Main Capitol Bldg, RM 225, Harrisburg, PA 17120. USA or phone on (717) 783-1198, fax on (717) 783-1396 / (717) 787-7859.***

It is vital that Mumia, who is confined to a cell every day except for 5 hours a week, receives messages of support. Send him a card now ! It'll cost you 41p in postage. Letters can be sent direct to ***Mumia Abu-Jamal #AM-8335, SCI Greene, 1040 East Roy Furman Highway, Waynesburg, PA 15370-8090. USA.*** (Mumia's e-mail: mumia@aol.com)

You can spread the word by showing the video *From Death Row, This Is Mumia Abu-Jamal* (contact Partisan Defence Committee on 0171-485-1396 - Just say you are interested in the Mumia case and ignore any Spartacist League party recruitment).

- The excellent 270 page book *Still Black, Still Strong (Survivors Of The War Against Black Revolutionaries)* from publishers Semiotext(e) includes much stuff on Dhoruba Bin Wahad, COINTELPRO, MOVE, Assata Shakur and Mumia Abu-Jamal. Only £5 (+50p P+P) from Counter Productions, PO Box 556, London SE5 ORL. UK. or from decent bookshops.

JUSTICE FOR JOY?

The trial is also still going on (as we go to press) of 3 cops charged over the death of Joy Gardner. Joy, a 40 yr old Jamaican woman, died in July '93 after immigration officers and police broke into her flat, strapped her into a body belt and taped her legs together and taped up her mouth.

She developed brain damage and died. It is yet to be seen if anyone will be 'convicted'. Rarely are any officers of the state - cops, screws, immigration, squaddies in N. Ireland - charged, or if charged found guilty of murdering, framing up, beating up working class people, especially black people. Will the case be any different in Joy Gardner or Brian Douglas' case? We shouldn't expect justice from the state that kills us: we have to take it ourselves in both hands. Whatever their courts say, we won't forget.

inside...

conversation with Diana Pollard of London Fat Womens' Group

plus

- *benefit cuts bog off*
- *hackney estates flogged off*
- *rapist chased off*
- *c.j.a protestors get off*

WARRANT SIGNED
EXECUTION MID AUG
ACT NOW 4 MUMIA

us, you, your money blurb

everyone here is sick of our usual rant that goes here, so read this-

- **send us new s (via post and fax)**
- **exchange your paper for ours**
- **distribute copies locally - collect from 121, 56a or 75a (addresses in contacts section) or write to us**
- **send SAE(s) for next issue(s)**
- **give us your spare money (thanks for 60 quid in donations folks!)**
- *donate ripped off office supplies - computer discs, fax rolls, modems, copier paper, a small photocopier*
- *if anyone wants contraflow on tape, let us know and we'll do you one.*

CLASS WAR IN THE CLASSROOM

We reported in the last issue of contraflow that over 200 lecturers at Southwark College in South London, were on strike against a package of compulsory redundancies being imposed by the management. It was a very solid strike, with strong support from students and non-teaching workers, at the college and high participation on picket lines - inspiring given the strikers weren't getting strike pay. After two and a half weeks management backed down and the strikers achieved a partial victory. The management agreed to remove the immediate threat of compulsory redundancies, improved their offer for voluntary redundancies, and to let the union see the financial reports which will allow them to challenge the cuts. As management haven't ruled out compulsory redundancies at a later date, the action has been 'suspended' and could be resumed, if and when they face further attacks. But with a strong organisation and a lot of solidarity (twenty grand was collected for the strikers!), they're ahead on points after the first round.

Meanwhile ...

The NUT leadership are worried about their image, with the press screaming "militant takeover" just because the "membership" managed to force them into a ballot (some time) for a one-day strike (some time, like in the holidays). In fact what happened was the two moderate left factions [STA and CDFU for acrojunkies] just bureaucratically getting it together enough to outvote the leadership. So the leadership has appointed a well known PR consultant to boost their fortunes. Tim Bell's previous successes include working for The D-day celebrations, President de Klerk, Royal Mail privatisation and David Mellor [while he was scoring for Chelsea].

SAOIRSE

Since the IRA declared a complete ceasefire on 31st August last year, there's been anything but peace in N. Ireland. While the atmosphere has definitely changed a lot, the British Army and the RUC still occupy 'nationalist' areas, still harass, beat up, and intimidate 'republicans' and try to recruit people as informers. At the same time, despite attempts by republicans to put the issue of political prisoners at the centre of the 'Peace Process' agenda, over 500 republican prisoners remain in jails around the world, mostly in the North of Ireland and the UK.

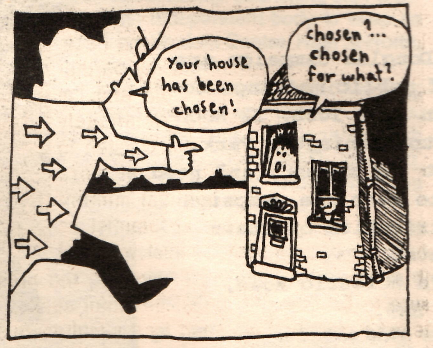
The organisation *Saoirse* (meaning 'Freedom' in gaelic) has been formed by friends and relatives of republican prisoners, to campaign for the release of all those held in jail as a result of the war in Ireland. This is their long-term aim, but as an immediate demand they are calling for irish political prisoners to be transferred back to Ireland, to be nearer their families and communities. A London-based Saoirse group was set up in March. Get in touch, get involved. Affiliations are £10 a year. Contact Saoirse, PO Box 3923, London, NW5 1RA. Also see the calendar for events.

the greatest hackney rip-off..?

Hackney Council has decided to try to sell 19 large council estates across the Borough. This scam is called the 'Estate Regeneration Scheme' and involves transferring control of the estates to combinations of housing associations and private developers. The first many tenants knew about this was a letter through the door saying the head of housing was 'pleased to be able to tell you that the Council has decided to include your estate ...'. Gee thanks - I should have stayed in bed.

While tenants will get to vote on the proposals, if the whole ERS goes through some 30% of Hackney's remaining council stock will have been sold off in one go. This is also at a time when almost 600 council homes are being demolished as part of the Dalston City Challenge.

The ERS is being sold as a way to do up estates which the Council has allowed to fall into disrepair. But the negative effects of transfer to a Housing Association are many:


Your house has been chosen!
chosen?... chosen for what?

* **Higher rents** - a particular attack on low income waged workers.
* **Loss of secure tenancies** - which make it easier to evict tenants.

But less well known are some of the other effects of being Housing association (HA) tenants:

* HAs are attempting to limit the number of children and poor people living in their estates [see the Guardian of 26/4/95]

* HAs are showing themselves to be very poor at responding to issues of racism and racist harrassment - The Newham Monitoring Project has said:

"we are faced with HAs which are more inaccessible, where power is more diffuse and where officials are more difficult to pin down ... many are new ... possessing neither the structures, skills or relevant experience to deal with racist harrassment." [NMP Annual Report 1994/5 pg 15]

While keeping the estates under council control is no solution - the threat to rents and security - not to mention the jobs of estate maintenance workers - is enough to choose the lesser of the two evils.

'Flow readers interested in resisting the ERS should drop us a line . Things are happening on the resistance front, but its a bit confused at the moment. Contact the Colin Roach Centre, 75a (see contacts)

Whose Benefit??

You can't have failed to notice the rumblings by the government about introducing new tougher benefits. Most notably; income support (for dolees) and unemployment benefit are to be replaced by Job Seekers Allowance, which will mean more hassling of claimants to 'look for work'; and Incapacity Benefit will replace sickness benefit: you'll have to collect a certain number of points, and you'll be tested by their own scabby doctors (ex-Prison Medical Service perhaps). Industrial injuries payments to people injured at work have also been reduced. The attacks are only the latest in a long line of cuts and thievery of benefits over the last two decades. Job seekers allowance won't come in till next year, but is being piloted in some areas - Reading is one, anyone know anymore? Incapacity benefit is already being implemented.

But it's not all being brought in without resistance! On April 1st 15 claimants' groups and commmunity /subversive organisation from around the country met in Oxford, to discuss resistance to the JSA.....As a result plans are afoot in London for getting together to fight back. A meeting is planned to try and gather groups and individuals interested in this idea, hopefully there will be discussions on what the benefits will mean, ideas on how to dodge and get round the new rules, and strategies for collective support for those hassled or cut off by the DSS.

......AND A CLOUD OF GIROS FELL FROM THE SKY!!

*The meeting will be at **75a Mildmay Park, Newington Green, N1,** on July 1st, 11am till 1pm. The place is accessible for wheelchairs, there'll be a creche, there will be food in the day and food/drink in the evening, and some money will be available to help with claimants' fares. Come along! Sock it to 'em!*

Nuclear Transport in Germany pushed through by 6000 cops

After more than 10 years of widespread resistance against the dumping of highly-radioactive burnt fuel rods onto a multi-million pound site near the north German town of Gorleben the so called 'Castor' container - heavily guarded by 6000 cops - arrived on the 25th April after a days journey from the Philippsburg nuclear power plant.

In an attempt to stop the transport from departing from the south German nuclear power plant, militant anti-nuclear activists sabotaged the railways in six different places leading to the interruption of rail services on all major north-south routes. Nationwide, metal 'anchors' were thrown across the overhead railway powerlines becoming entangled in the trains' current collectors, dragging the lines down over several miles and causing damage in excess of 500,000 DM. 100,000 commuters were late to work that morning. Shortly before the planned departure of the transport last summer, similar sabotage to roads and railways led to a last-minute political decision to stop it because of 'security risks'.

Although the protest didn't deter the environment secretary Angela Merkel from giving the go-ahead for the transport this time, the anti-nuclear movement has increased the political price for these transports dramatically. The security costs were more than 15 million which worries the nuclear industry as local county politicians want them to foot the bill instead of the taxpayers.

Despite the police declaring the whole district a no-go area, 3000 demonstrators confronted the 125 ton cast-iron Castor container in the town of Dannenberg, 10 miles away from the Gorleben dump. Riot police beat and kicked protestors and used water canons spraying a potentially lethal mix of water and CS-gas. Protest actions ranged from blocking roads with tractors and cars, building burning barricades, bomb scares along the train lines and dismantling rail tracks, to arson attacks on the federal office of 'radiation protection' in Salzgitter. After a 5 hour battle for only 10 miles of road the first Castor container with its cargo of 9 deadly burnt nuclear rods finally arrived in Gorleben. The bastards are now trying to sue the arrested protestors to claim money to cover the security costs! Three more transports are due this year if they can afford it...

Well done to all those who were there. Keep up the fight !!!

p.s. The Gorleben dump is supposed to recieve more nuclear waste from the Sellafield processing plant , which is transported by rail through London and across the channel. There's a lot to do.......

WOMEN FIGHT BACK

As a new feature in contraFLOW we're starting a regular column dedicated to true stories of personal, heroic 'fight back' experiences of women in London. There's all sorts of things that can be said about why it's important to hear such stories, to spend space on our 'little' victories, but I don't wanna. Just read and be inspired. And if you're a woman who has a tale of a shitty situation you were in that you got yourself out of, whether that be telling off a mysogonist boss at work or thwarting a rape attempt or finally getting it together to leave an abusive lover -and I believe *every* woman has such stories of incredible strength and heroism- write to 'K.M.' c/o ContraFLOW and I'll try to publish what you send. You can also be phoned to tell your story if you'd rather, and you can always remain anonymous. Stay strong, keep fighting.

elizabeth's story

"Last October I left my friend's house in Camberwell around nine at night and headed for home. It was quite dark that Sunday night but the streets were well lit and I knew the route really well. At some point, right when I was near Burgess Park, a guy passed me and crossed the street. I didn't really think anything of it except for my regular sense of caution I always feel when I'm walking alone. As I got near the corner, all of the sudden I heard the sound of keys rattling as if someone was running toward me. I swung around just in time to get a harsh grab at my crotch; it was the same guy who had passed me and I guess he had hid and waited for my approach. I screamed "No!" really loud, then immediately sat down on the ground, which happened to be directly under a streetlamp. I yelled "Fuck off!" and I don't think the guy anticipated my reaction, judging by the look on his face. All those things I did were just automatic, completely instinctual. The guy took off. It was wierd because in the brief moment before he grabbed me, when I still saw him running toward me, something really intuitive told me he meant trouble. But in that moment I couldn't even feel fear, only the urge to defend myself. Immediately afterward I got up and took off for home but I was completely just filled with rage and anger. I totally sensed that this young guy was a rapist in the making."

Wow. Maybe not now, now that he had to deal with Elizabeth who did not play passive as most rapists desire. Thanks.

FEATHERS FLY!

NOT JUST OUR PROBLEM

• conversation with diana pollard from london fat womens group

Those of us who work on this paper have long felt that there's been a large void in contraFLOW when it comes to writings of the personal. Some freak out about it, thinking that personal politics are too 'lifestylist' in nature - there are more serious battles to fight like surging global capitalism, right? - but most of us believe that to separate the two, 'serious' politics from personal politics, is silly and even politically naive. Do we really believe that the personal shit that makes all of our lives so difficult is going to magically disappear when the state topples? Such ideas are foolish.

So I had the opportunity to spend six hours recently talking with Diana Pollard from the London Fat Women's Group about these issues and more, in what was suppose to be an interview on the politics of fat and fat phobia for the paper. Instead our interview turned more discussion, a highly charged and emotive one I thought, so the result here is more of a mish-mash of just a few of the things we talked about. But like most issues, I think, the politics of fat and body acceptance are both highly personal *and* highly externally political; it can't be written off as one or the other. The few weeks I've spent on this issue have been intense, zillions of questions arising from discussions with friends and co-horts on beauty, attraction, insecurity and their social construction. I hope you give this some thought.

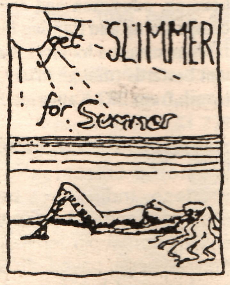
"My racism, my homophobia is my problem and it is my responsibility because it hurts people. Only society's hatred of fat makes fat a problem for me. Some protest 'racism is different - you can't choose your skin colour but you can choose to be thin'. Applied to homophobia this argument is obviously specious. Whether or not lesbianism is a choice is irrelevent. The homophobic boot in the face is an equal outrage, whether or not I choose to be fat, I am""

Diana is a self-defined radical who has been involved in activism since the Vietnam War. She's the founder of Rotunda Press, which published the British edition of ***Shadow on a Tightrope; Writings by Women on Fat Oppression***, an amazing book telling the stories of fat women, how they've struggled and survived in a fat-phobic society, and confronting fat myths and fat hatred that runs rampant in western society. She runs the Body Image Factory which does workshops for women on improving body image and finally, she has been a member of the London Fat Women's Group since 1989. The London Fat Women's Group is one of a couple of groups in the country working to expose and change fat phobia; members aim to turn around fat stereotypes, support others to stop dieting and educate people in the health and education professions -whose wrongful attitudes can be highly damaging- on fat health and sensitivity.

"*We're a social group too,*" said Diana, *"and in a sense we're a more radical version of some of the other groups working on this issue. My own personal interest is in 'Body Acceptance' —and I mean acceptance of all body shapes and sizes. But other groups, such as Diet Breakers, are more interested in assimilation for fat people, saying it's ridiculous to have size 8, size 10 as the goal for all women because we're not built like that, and instead maybe size 16 should be a more realistic goal. For me that doesn't go far enough. I want complete acceptance for everyone, I don't just want the gap widened for what's acceptable."*

In preparation for this interview I read Diana's Shadow.. and was filled with rage and pain from reading the different women's stories. Women wrote of endless experiences of pain inflicted by friends, family, lovers and strangers telling them they're ugly, lazy, lacking in self-control, stupid — all those things thin oriented society had taught us to believe. Fat people have had (and still do) things thrown at them, get spit on, set denied work because they're considered unattractive to look at. It goes on and on. Some women wrote of going clothes shopping and never finding things their size, effectively telling them they don't exist, or at least that they shouldn't. Fat women are given every sort of patronising and sexist reasons for why they are fat —"you fear sex, you crave size because women are powerless in this culture and the kitchen is the only thing you can control, you want to recreate a pregnancy, you're bored, unfulfilled, etc., etc.."

Diana talked about women undergoing endless starvation diets (that of course added on pounds in the end because this is what dieting does), and even having dangerous radical surgeries such as stomach stapling and intestinal bypass surgery because the pain and risk was less than the pain of being fat. She talked of women getting screamed at by doctors for not losing weight, doctors not taking into consideration fat people's weight when performing risky procedure (sometimes leading to death), and even of physicians refusing to treat patients simply because they are fat. Look, these aren't just a few isolated incidents; fat people put up with this all the time and this is oppression.



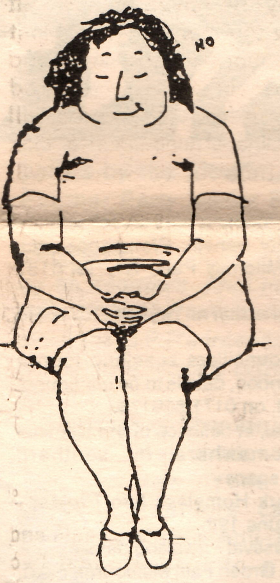
For me, most painful of all of this was learning about the intense level of self-hatred and self-loathing experienced by people who are fat (and then others, which I'll get to). People wrote of attempting suicide, of never being able to look at themselves in the mirror, because it was all too painful. But the summation is that it is not that fat itself is the cause, the problem - it's not. Rather it's society's hatred of fat, the hatred that makes people miserable, that's the problem.

I found it interesting, disgusting mostly, that I got more than a few crap jokes about doing this article and interview with Diana, fat jokes from activist, comrades. So I wondered, why is it acceptable that 'right-on'ers' (ugh) give shit about people's bodies, but we (*I'm writing as a non-fat person*) wouldn't think of doing the same about skin colour, class or sex? Why are some oppressions **OK but not** others .In fact, leftists have always used fat as a symbol of the oppressor - "fat capitalists", "pigs". It's because thin people still view fat as a choice ("*they can always lose weight*"), view it as lack of personal control, think it's a result of self-indulgence and that fat people are weak.

What is unacknowledged is that the thin ethos which leads to fat hatred is a white middle class one to begin with. It doesn't acknowledge that there are cultures for whom fat is considered beautiful, a sign of health, power and strength. Likewise, not acknowledged is that the lower one looks in the economic sphere - and there are more people of colour the lower one goes - the more fat people there are, thus fat negativity hits the poor and non-white with a particular vengeance. Finally, and this one can't be emphasised enough, our fat hatred, our ideas that bodies are suppose to look only a very narrowly defined way, is a decisive attack on, is most hard felt by women. "*All women,*" Diana insists, *"have issues around body image. Not a woman exists who doesn't want to change something about her body."* Behind every woman dieting, every woman striving to have a body like Cindy Crawford or Naomi Campbell (which is just not POSSIBLE, not a physical possibility for 95% of the female population), instead of being joyful in who/what she is, is a woman who hates her body, hates herself. You can't separate the two. What I'm dying to know is, after the glorious revolution will we all be thin? Will I be 5'8"?

"i feel so strongly that the whole idea should be made clear that there are different body sizes and body shapes, the same way that there are different colours of skin and textures of hair and we don't need to change. All these things together make something worth having""

Sitting down to write this all has been incredibly difficult for me, I think primarily because of how close to home it hits. I am a non-fat, very fit and healthy woman who - I found out while doing this - diets. I watch what I eat, drink only diet pop and exercise regularly because I do not want to get fat. I don't like my body. Even more so I don't like my face. I think I should look like the latest models in the Face. I've convinced myself that my partner would like me better if I did and I'm convinced my life would be infinitely easier if I did. People would listen to me more I'd get what I want more easily. I am also a political militant and as much of a radical feminist as one can be in a post-feminist world. I think the media images of women, the pressure to be thin and model beautiful sucks. I reject it and am tormented by it simultaneously. And I know I'm not alone. Last night I talked about this stuff with a couple other contraFlowers, one of whom is really struggling with issues of inadequacy, feeling he is unattractive compared to others (he's not, he's very attractive), who worries about his natural body odours, should he wear deodorant, etc.. The other spent years and years convinced he was physically unattractive because he didn't have a girlfriend until he was 24. He still doesn't like looking in the mirror. He's gorgeous and he's my partner. I hate people suffering like this. So what's going on?



Well, somewhere, somehow we all developed these warped ideas about ourselves and our bodies. Our attitudes toward fat people and how people look, Diana pointed out, are necessarily tied to all of our body- and self- acceptance in that the need to knock others comes directly from feeling crap about ourselves. Putting others down falsely builds ourselves up, it's a strange form of creating hierarchy.

So what then, should we strive for? Personally I believe body fascism, the idea that there's only one right way to be, should be dismantled with a vengeance. I want people - my activist friends - to confront the ways they've unconsciously or consciously justified their joking, and understand that whether fat through nature or nurture, people deserve to be treated with equal respect. To me, it's the base of our anarchist politics.

As Diana said, I want people to know and understand that there are as many variations of body types as there are people and not one of them is 'correct', every one is of absolutely the same value and respect as any other. I want a continual celebration of diversity. I want this all so understood that I can even apply it to myself.

Moving toward a society that has full body acceptance is probably about as difficult as any of our other struggles. It's all a slow process. In our discussion Diana suggested that one brainstorm his or her internalised stereotypes of fat people (they're lazy, ugly, asexual...) and choose to actively contradict them. Part of that, she said, is actually getting to know fat people -and all sorts of people who are different from oneself- encouraging them into one's life. Once one feels a human connection to people it becomes much harder to cause them harm. .

Likewise, we should not be afraid to confront fat and body negativity when we hear it, just like we want to confront racist or sexist remarks, and not because this is the 'p.c.' thing to do but because we know in our hearts it's right. We can try and re-program our own ideas of beauty, find the beauty in people you might not normally try to with. Lastly, something I strongly believe, is that we can support our friends in their personal struggles with these issues, let them know we think they're the greatest as they are, genuinely *compliment* them as they deserve. (When was the last time you did this?)

This article represents -literally- about 1/20th of all the things Diana and I discussed in our time together. I'm sad to have cut out so much, about sexuality, about fat and health, about men's experiences with this issue, about patriarchy and competition between women, about the gay liberation movement, about how to politically approach the issue of extremities of fat (when fat becomes a disability), and on and on. I almost believe I haven't done Diana justice by leaving out so many of the important things she said. However, if you are interested in receiving copies of ***Shadow on a Tightrope***, which covers a lot of these things and is a fantastic book, you can get them for £7.95 incl. postage from *Rotunda Press, BM Box 207, WC1N 3XX*. You can also find out about the Body Image Factory through the same address, addressed to the B.I.M.. If you're interested in the **London Fat Women's Group**, the group meets every first Wednesday of the month at 7pm at the London Women's Centre on Wild Court, Holborn. Copies of their newsletter are available through the above address for £2.50/yr, four issues.

"Just talking to people can really change things. When people come out with crap, instead of telling them off, if you actually talk to them about what they said and what was wrong about it - and I don't mean morally wrong, just mistaken factually incorrect - you can change things. Like "I understand why you can easily think that, but..."".

• Finally, on August 13, in a fun celebration of food and eating, the London Fat Women's Group is sponsoring a potluck picnic for members and supporters on Sunday, August 13. The picnic is gathering at 2pm at the Serpentine Gallery, Hyde Park, and people are asked to bring non-diet foods to share.

SPACE INVADER NEWS

The Do It Yourself anti CJA movement has been going on the offensive lately - going out and taking space, doing what we're not supposed to, instead of just protesting.

On April 23rd a few hundred took a site near St Georges Hill, Surrey, scene of the Diggers first squat back in 1649. A week was spent there partying, gardening and visiting the Hill, which is now occupied by some millionaire's golf course. Despite threatening noises from chief cops beforehand, they turned out totally fluffy.

THIS STUDIO IS (Y)OURS

On May 5th a load of road protestors took the stage live on TV after getting pissed off with the patronising bleatings of host Richard Littlejohn and some Tory MP complaining about activists on the dole. Seems they gave a fine performance, but didn't impress the TSG who were waiting outside and laid in hard.

On VE Day a couple of hundred protestors took Stonehenge to party for the day, and ask where's this freedom the war was meant to have won us? Meanwhile SQUASH took a tube station platform and camped down to commemorate the thousands of people who, despite troops being called out to stop them, squatted tube stations during air raids in WW2 and the massive squatters' movement immediately after the war, which saw 1000s of people occupying empty houses and army camps.

May 14th saw a big action of Reclaim the Streets, a street party at Camden Lock. Rather a soft target considering the masses of consumers who *normally* block the whole area, and are we stopping cars just to allow the expansion of the market? But three hundred people moving through the tubes to take a street was a great feeling. After most people had pissed off, though, the Old Bill, who had been observed running around like headless chickens (it's rumoured they had expected sixty people, and weren't prepared for the size of the demo) waded in hard and nicked ten people, putting three in hospital. One passer-by was nicked coming out of a chip shop, after he innocently pointed out to the filth how bad cars are for our health, and asked why were they pushing that demonstrator's head into the pavement. The Legal Defence and Monitoring group managed to trace most of the arrestees, and support is being organised for those facing charges, including affray and threatening behaviour. Anyone who witnessed any of the arrests, could they please get in touch with the **LDMG, Tel 0181 802 9804, or write to BM Box Haven, London, WC1N 3XX.**

WRONG KIND OF PARTY

Meanwhile the Coalition against the CJA called a national demo the day before Mayday, and despite lack of publicity word got round enough to bring out over three thousand people. The "Coalition" has been concentrating on building a paper front of organisations that pass motions, a front that the Socialist Workers Party can wheel out when they want, and drop like they've dropped all their other fronts in the past. This doesn't mean that all the local Coalitions aren't real organisations or that we should ignore our real weakness at coordinating across the country and getting out of our ghettos. The parties have the resources and the troops to get round and get seen, but without necessarily doing anything.

Good news from Maidstone where nearly half of a Kent Coalition demo got nicked in January supporting 3 hunt sabs nicked under the Act. The CPS have been dropping all the charges, showing up the heavy-handed cop tactics - respect to the 34 for standing together and refusing deals.

what's on

By the way - just 'cause your event isn't here doesn't mean we don't like you - please send us details - especially for events in September - by 25/7/95 - ta - the calendar compilers

JUNE

- **Fri 2.** Anti-M11 benefit,with jazz guitarist Jim Mullen. Chats palace, Brooksby Walk, E5, 7.30pm. £6/£3.50.
- **Sat 3**. Walk to Stonehenge starts, 3pm.Meet at noon at the Peace Pagoda, Battersea Park.
- and ... Advance party benefit: Tabernacle - Powis Sq W11 - Fun da mental [Bradford Asian Dub] and more 8pm £7/4
- and ... Mc Libel Benefit: McMillans Bar - Mc Millan St. SE8 - local bands
- and ... United Systems Sound party - somewhere - call 0181 959 7525
- Sun 4. Saoirse Picket of Downing St.,W1, calling for freedom for irish prisoners.12 - 1
- and ... National Peace Council [Liberal but a good laugh] Childrens' Festival - Finsbury park N4 - games, music etc.
- **Mon 5.** Planning Meeting for Cpn. Against The Arms Trade anti Brit Aerospace demo, Rainbow Centre - 23 Highgate Rd NW5 - 7.30
- **Weds 7**. Meeting with 2 comrades from Mexico, talking about the Zapatista movement. Organised by Contraflow [that's us] - Basement 9 Hoxton Sq. N1 - 7.30
- and ... Anti Policing meeting organised by Colin Roach Centre - 7.30 Halkev Centre,92-100 Stoke Newington rd, N16. speakers include Donald Douglas, brother of Brian, and the widow of Shiji Lapite, also killed by police.
- **Thur 8.** Meeting with 2 comrades from Mexico. organised by Contraflow. - 121 Centre, Brixton - with cafe - 7.30
- and ... Save Hackney Downs School Demo - Hackney Town Hall, Mare St, - 6.00
- and ... Justice for Shah Alam - Picket Thames Magistrates Ct. Bow Rd.Tube - call 0956 - 365 393 to confirm - 9.15 am
- **Sat 10**. Justice for Brian Douglas - the must go demo of the summer - 12 noon The Pond Clapham Common march to Kennington Park - 3 pm
- and ... planned action about sale of 'Hawk' fighter planes to Indonesia ph. 0171 281 0927
- and ...theFleadh: wicked irish music festival, Finsbury Park, but £27.50 - need we say more?
- and ... Media Jam - weekend of workshops [DIY zines, e-mail, videos etc] Phoenix Gallery, Lewes Rd. Brighton ph Peter 01273 739 634 for info
- and ... Network of Autonomous Zones meeting 121 centre - 7.30
- and ... 10 - 18th is London Bike Week so why not just get your own Critical mass on the roads every day
- **Sun 11**. Nigeria Democracy Week - Demo from Imperial War Museum to Trafalgar Square - start 2.00 pm- and later - loads of events - prayers, pickets, conferences - for details call 1071 627 1299
- and ... don't forget the continuing collection of material aid for anarcho - syndicalists in Nigeria c/o Red and Black Club (see contacts) - things needed include condoms, tapes, books
- and ... alleged anti CJA festival in Hyde Park, no details.
- and ... Anti-fascist estate organising meeting for Barnsbury and Priory Green estates, Islington. ph. 0956 - 365 393 for info
- and ... Meeting of education workers network at Red and Black Club. 2.30
- and...Exploding Cinema (cllective of radical-film/video makers),do. Film, vids, performance. Loughborough Hotel, Loughborough rd, SW9. 7.30-late. £3
- **Mon 12.** South Coast Ramble Against Mega Road - Folkestone to Honiton - starts - ph 01293 884 273 for your summer holiday [oops - committed social protest]
- and...Picket of Nottingham Crown Court, in solidarity with David Bowen, Strangeways Prisoner, for his trial for escaping . 60 Canal St., Nottngham. 9.30am on.Transport going from London, tel. London ABC on 0171 737 0145.
- **Tue 13**. Opening Night of 'It's a Crime' [anti CJA play] by Barry O'Keefe in Islington Box office 0171 704 2001 Culture attack or what?
- Thur 15 - Sat 17. Liberty 'Human Rights Convention' ph 0171 403 3888
- **Fri 16.**Commemoration of the 1976 Soweto Uprising in S. Africa.Speakers, poetry, music. At the Halkevi Centre, 92-100 Stoke Newington Rd, N16.7pm.
- **Sat 17**. Benefit party for the Freedom Network, at Cooltan Arts Centre, the Old Dole House, 372 Coldharbour Lane, Brixton, SW9. Ring their events line for details (see below)
- and ... Workshop on "*speaking and writing*" at Red and Black Club. Write to them for info.
- London Anarchist Black Cross benefit, with bands, drink, food, etc. 121 Centre (see contacts) 8pm till later.
- **Sat 17 - Sun 25.** Alleged free festival near Stonehenge. Spot the CJA arrests !!!
- **Sun 18.** Camden Green Fair, Camden Gardens,Kentish Town rd, NW5.11-5pm.
- **Mon 19**. Southwark Homeless Info Project workshop: the Criminal Justice Act, PIOs, Interim Possession Orders. Good info on how to beat the changed laws on squatting (useful for tenants too).SHIP, 612 Old Kent Rd, SE15. Tel 0171 277 7639.
- **Sat 23**. Lesbian/Gay Pride festival. March through central London, then it's off to Victoria Park,London, E9, for the music, stalls, etc.
- and ... national Day of Action Against deportations and detentions of asylum seekers/new asylum laws. There are demos at
  - Campsfield Detention Centre, near Kidlington, Oxfordshire, 12-2pm,
  - Harmondsworth Detention Centre, Colnbrook Bypass, Harmondsworth,Hounslow.12-2pm.
  - Haslar Prison, (ring 01705 698 435 for details).
  - Winson Green Prison, Birmingham. Tel 0121 5514518. The Colin Roach Centre,(see contacts) is taking a coach to Harmondsworth,.
- **Sun 25**. Contraflow benefit cafe: Beans!!! Videos on Battle of the Beanfield and more, plus beanfeast.121 Centre, 3pm till late evening.£3/£2.
- **Tues 27.** Public Meeting: Survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki talk about the experience. Tel.Yorks CND, 01274 730795.
- **Wed 28.** Mitchel McLaughlin, Northern Chair of Sinn Fein, speaks at Camden Irish Centre, Murray St, NW1, 7.30pm.
- **Thurs 29.** Emma Humphries, jailed for life for killing her violent and abusive boyfriend, goes up for appeal. Picket the High Court, the Strand, WC1, from 9.30am. Get down there and give her your support.
- and... Newham Monitoring Project Public meeting on Police Accountability. Launching their charter demanding an independent body to keep an eye on the rozzers.Shalom Centre, High St North, London, E6. tube: 7.30pm.
- and... 'Housewives in Dialogue' Public Meeting: Sex Work, Sexual Violence and Sexual Choices. organised by Wages Due Lesbians/English Collective of Prostitutes. 230a Kentish Town Rd, NW1. 7pm.Contact via Kings Cross Womens Centre, 71 Tonbridge St, WC1H 9DZ.
- **Fri 30.** Critical Mass:(see regular events list).This is a muscial one,so bring yer instruments. Also after this one there's going to be a picnic in Hyde Park,so bring grub and then some.

JULY

- **Sat 1.** Organising meeting against Jobseekers Allowance/Incapacity Benefit. Workshops (see article). 11-5, 75a Mildmay Park, N1. Tel 0181 8029804 for info
- **Sun 2.** ?Anti-roads action at Twyford Down. No details as yet.
- **3-6.** Sinn Fein councillors speaking tour in Britain. Events in London, details to be confirmed. Tel Troops Out Movt, on 0171 6091743.
- **7-9.** Big free festival, in defiance of the Criminal Justice Act. Somewhere in southern England.Watch this space
- **Mon 10** Southwark Homeless Info Project - Workshops as per June 19th
- **13-16** - Phoenix Festival - awaiting details
- Sun 16. Redbridge Green Fair, Melbourne Field, Valentines Pk, Redbridge. 11.30 - 7.30
- and ...event in Trafalgar square for 50th anniv of first nuclear test ph 01274 730 795 [YCND]
- **Fri 21**. Legal Defence & Monitoring Group benefit gig - with Bender, Decadent Few and maybe the Blaggers. Chats Palace, Brooksby Wlk, E5. 8 - 12.
- **Sat 29**. Deptford Urban Fee Festival - Fordham Pk. SE8.
- **Sun 30.** Contraflow Benefit Cafe:'PoliticalGuilt'. Your day off from PC guilt. Food, drink, acts, chat, laughs. At 121 Centre,3-9pm. £3/£2.

AUGUST

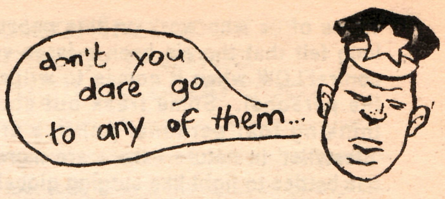
- **4 - 7** 'Shut Sellafield': Camp - ph - 01706 371 387
- **8 - 9** Faslane Peace Camp - Nagasaki Action - 0141 368 2901
- **Thurs 10**. Prisoners Justice Day: demo in memory of prisoners who've died/suicided/been killed inside. Demo at a London jail:contact ABC, c/o 121 Centre for info.
- **Sun 13.** Picnic - London Fat Women's group and supporters - Serpentine gallery, Hyde park - Bring food to share - non diet. 2pm.
- **Sun 27.** Contraflow benefit cafe. Theme:Japan! Food, drink, acts, videos, etc.121 Centre, 3-9pm. £3/£2.
- **Thur 31** Sinn Fein Peace tour - Rally in Trafalgar Square.Tel Troops Out Movt. on 0171 609 1743 for time and details.

SEPTEMBER

- **Sun 3.** NMP anti-racist family festival - Canning Town Rec. Ground, off Newham Way, E16. 12 - 8.
- and ... actiion planned at defence forces equipment exhibition - Tel. Jen at Campaign Against the Arms Trade for details. 0171 281 0927.

and the award for the most forward looking group on our events list goes to:

- **Sat 23.** National CAAT action against Landmines (it says here!)


don't you dare go to any of them...

REGULAR EVENTS

- **Every Tues & Thurs, 7pm**: 121 Cafe, 121 Railton Rd, Brixton, London SE24. Dead cheap vegan food.
- **Every Thursday**: radical queers OutRage meet, 7.30, YWCA Central Club, 16-22 Great Russell St, WC1.
- **The McLibel Trial** of 2 London Greenpeace activists under attack from food giant McDonalds for telling the truth about its exploitative, unhealthy, capitalist nastiness. Most days at the High Court,
- **First Saturday of each month**: Dead By Dawn,speedcore/techno party at 121 Centre. Discussion at 9pm, repetitive beats and sweaty bodies form a multi-dimensional Black Mass 11pm till light.
- **Last Friday of every month**: Critical Mass: mad and crazed cyclists & skateboarders take over central London streets, offing psycho cabbies .5.45pm, NFTPiazza, South Bank, Waterloo,SE1
- Freedom Network events line: tel. 0171 501 9253.

GLOBAL SHORTS

CENTRE CRISIS - The London Rape Crisis Centre has had its funding stopped after 19 years of vital work. The decision, by the London Borough Grants Committee was taken without discussion or a vote. The Centre intends to appeal against the decision, and is also trying to find 6,000 donors to covenant £10 a year to keep the place going. The Centre Appeal line for more info is 0171 916 5466.

WARNING - People in Post Office uniforms are working for the TV licence inspectors, trying to catch us offguard. Careless talk can cost money!

15 Years of Resistance in Newham

The Newham Monitoring Project is now 15 years old - their annual report is a valuable local study of fighting racism in east London - particularly in the way it links housing, education and anti policing case work with campaigning and fighting fascism;- showing how anti-fascism means a lot more than just biffing the most blatant bastards (though thats OK too).
[avail. from 382 Katherine Rd E7 ph. 0181 552 6284]

AGAINST SLAVERY - The Chhatisgarh Women's Organisation (CWO) in Madhya Pradesh, India, have been fighting for over a decade against bonded labour, which means slavery for whole families on the basis of debts that never get payed off. Bonded labour is officially abolished but without groups like the CWO there would be nobody doing anything about it. To be more effective in a large rural area, CWO are trying to get a jeep and an appeal has been launched by the Friends of CWO who can be contacted on 0171 837 7509.

TURKEY WARZONE - The Turkish state has been fighting resistance on all fronts, on the streets of the capital, repressing (sometimes with bombs) any criticism in the media, and militarily across the Iraqi border against Kurdish fighters based there.

On March 12th a gang of state-sponsored gunmen attacked five tea houses in the working class Gazi Osman Pasa neighbourhood of Istanbul, killing one 67 year-old and injuring many more. Thousands took to the streets to protest and were met by troops who opened fire on them. The demonstrations and repression continued for the next days with many killed, Counter Defence Committees set up to organise resistance and demos spreading across the country. The events have been portrayed as between different Islamic groups but the reality is working class anger up against state repression. One of the people nicked was a Mr Hasam Osan. Despite numerous witnesses, the cops deny any kmowledge and have effectively disappeared him. There have been hunger strikes in London and other cities to force the state to own up - contact 0171 275 8685 for info.

According to the Minister of Defence there are 250,000 deserters from the Turkish army. There is a War Resisters Association (SKD) fighting the militaristic, genocidal anti-Kurdish policy of the state, with 14 serving 3 year prison sentences for refusal to serve.

STATE DEATH SQUADS CONFIRMED - the bodies of 2 Basque activists, kidnapped in 1983 by the cop-connected GAL have finally been found and identified. The remains show that they had been tortured for months before being beaten to death. A few days after their kidnap, the Guardia Civil carried out mass arrests on organisations the two had been involved with - coincidence? Investigations have shown that GAL was effectively a secret Quango, under the reign of the Spanish socialist party. The latest discovery led to general strikes and violent clashes with the "autonomous" Basque police force. (Molotov)

REGISTRATION FOR "SEXUAL DEVIANTS"

The legislature in Montana USA is moving to pass measures that would make those of convicted of crimes, including those done under their repressive sexual laws, register for life with the cops. Their laws criminalise any sexual contact between members of the same sex with punishment of up to 10 years prison and fines up to $50,000. The current move puts lesbians and gays on a par with rapists and murderers. (Arm the Spirit)

Armed Struggle for Aotearoa

The meeting of the Asian Development Bank in Auckland in early May was met with a declaration of intent by radical Maori activists to engage in armed struggle to oppose the privatisation of resources in New Zealand. The bank meeting was chosen to warn off overseas capital with promises to blow up dams or burn down forests if they were privatised. The state authorities have indicated that they will use incitement and or seditition laws to repress these actions.

Interesting Publications

Counter Information, c/o Transmission, 28 Kng St.,, Glasgow, G1 5QP. (free/sae).International news of action and resistance to capitalism around the globe.

Bad Attitude, 121 Railton Rd, London SE24 (£1/SAE)Radical women's paper with international perspective and great news coverage. New issue out soon(ish)..

CARF, BM BOX 8784, London WC1N 3XX (80p + stamp)The usual excellent round up of organising against racism and fascism.

Schnews, c/o On the Fiddle, PO Box 2600, Brighton. Weekly anti-Criminal Justice Act newssheet. Send SAE.

Scarlet A, c/o 56a Info Shop(see below).Womens' experiences of the emotional aspects of abortion in a non-judgemental way. 25p plus stamp or SAE.

Contacts:

these groups are all fairly cool and are actually doing stuff that we think is going somewhere. Get involved and help everyone !

- **Advisory Service for Squatters**, 2 St Pauls Rd, London, N1.6pm.useful practical advice, the law etc.Send an SAE for their brill *Squatting is still legal* leaflet.
- **121 Centre**, 121 Railton Rd, Brixton, London, SE24. 071 274 6655. Squatted anarchist space: bookshop, meetings, parties, squatting, free info. Open 1-5 Sat, but ring to check.
- **56a Info Shop**, 56 Crampton St, London SE17. Squatted radical bookstore and more. Open Mon,Thurs,Fri, 3-7pm. Action, books, mags, records, posters and cool reading space full of current and obscure @ mags and booklets.
- **75@ Squat Centre**, 75A Mildmay Park N1, vegan caff Wed - Sun 7pm and much much more.
- **Colin Roach Centre**, 56 Clarence Rd E5 Space uniting Hackney Trade Union Support Unit, Hackney Community Defence Campaign, and other local revos and activists. Tel 0181 533 7111
- **Direct Action Network** (London and national contact), 3 Crawley Rd, Wood Green, London N22 6AN. Tel/FAX 081 889 1361. Disability rights organisation, militant and regularly out on the street. Produce briiliant newsletter. Also have groups in most cities.
- **Industrial Workers of the World (IWW)**, BM Box 4529, London WC1N 3XX. Active again, especially amongst despatch, education and unemployed workers. Coming soon to an industry near you.
- **Haringey Solidarity Group**, PO Box 2474, London, N8 0HW. Involved in community/social struggles, produce brilliant local 'Community Action' newsletter. Planning local action against Jobseekers Allowance.
- **Red and Black Club**, Unit 7, Theatre Place, 489 New Cross Road, Deptford, SE8. Local space run by members of the Solidarity Federation (anarcho-syndicalists), who want to see it used as a resource centre and organising/social/resistance space. Open Monday/Tuesday eves, 7-9, and Saturday mornings. They also need moolah to pay the rent.
- **FareDodgers Liberation Front**, Box FDLF, 121 Railton Road, London, SE24. Info, advice, organising, tube parties, against tube penalty fares, well in fact any fares. Send SAE for newsletter.